

Crime Victims Needs Assessment

Prepared for

**The Wisconsin Department of Justice
Office of Crime Victim Services**

and

Citizens of Judicial District 2

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Introduction

In 2005 the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Office of Crime Victim Services began a journey to develop a Crime Victim Needs Assessment process to document all crime-related services across the State of Wisconsin and to understand the needs of counties and tribal communities. The goal is to document crime victims' unmet needs and communities' priorities related to crime victim services. As such, this project:

- ✓ Gathers comprehensive/consistent information from Wisconsin counties and tribes
- ✓ Assists communities to collaboratively set priorities
- ✓ Disseminates results in user-friendly format
- ✓ Reflects viewpoints of crime victims

In 2006 World Bridge Research began assisting the Department of Justice with this Crime Victim Needs Assessment effort using an approach called Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR was developed in contrast to conventional research approaches. PAR is characterized by having three primary components: 1) an iterative process for conducting research that includes reflection and action; 2) having community members and stakeholders involved with the research process; and 3) using findings to promote positive community change. These three approaches are interwoven throughout the project design and provide for a richer and more culturally sensitive assessment than a researcher directed traditional approach. Essentially PAR is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it.

Essentially Participatory Action Research (PAR) is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it.

To document all crime-related services and unmet needs across Wisconsin, the Needs Assessment project began by interviewing key informants (victim/witness specialists and coordinators, law enforcement agencies [county and municipal], community service providers and representatives from local departments of human services) in each county and tribal community. Appointments were made with individuals and groups to ask them questions about:

- ✓ Community composition
- ✓ Services available to victims of crime
- ✓ Community assets
- ✓ Unmet needs of crime victims
- ✓ The underserved
- ✓ Crime trends
- ✓ Victim rights
- ✓ Innovative programs

Key informants were also asked to fill out a questionnaire about unmet needs at the end of the interview. The survey and interview questions shared some similar topics with the interviews providing an opportunity for the research team to learn the insights and reasons behind interviewees' perspectives. A second round of key informant interviews were held with named victim service agencies and other agencies or groups providing victim services programming that were deemed innovative and not known by victim service grant makers.

To build upon the iterative process for assessment and action, findings from the key informant interviews and surveys were presented at the District 2 Priority Setting meeting on May 1, 2008 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The meeting featured two parts – reflection and discussion about the findings from the interviews and surveys followed by a consensus building method using group participation technologies to identify recommendations for funding priorities for crime victim services needs and gaps.

In a final step for the district, the emerging recommendations were incorporated into an internet based survey tool which sought to prioritize the recommendations. Interviewed key informants, participants of the district meeting and all other known service providers in the district were asked to complete the survey.

The three initial steps – interviews and surveys, district meeting and on-line survey – are summarized in this report.

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These key informant interviews and surveys are to be rounded out with interviews and focus groups with victims/survivors of crime, members of underserved communities and representatives of statewide organizations. Also, an advisory group of victims, former victims and survivors from across the state oversees various aspects of the Needs Assessment's implementation.

Summary

Judicial District 2 is made up of the following Wisconsin counties: Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth. Every county in the district was represented in the needs assessment process with 12 individuals interviewed, 10 completing surveys, eight participating at the district meeting and two responding to the follow-up online survey.

The following summaries were created from the key informant interviews and surveys collected in Judicial District 2.

Crime trends:

- ✓ Burglaries
- ✓ Prescription drug abuse
- ✓ Computer theft
- ✓ Child abuse, neglect and pornography
- ✓ Identity theft and internet crime

Assets - commonly referred to services:

- ✓ Domestic violence programs
- ✓ Sexual assault programs
- ✓ Victim/witness services
- ✓ Counseling
- ✓ Private agencies requiring insurance
- ✓ Human services

Underserved crime victims:

- ✓ Victims needing alcohol and other drug treatment
- ✓ Gay and lesbian victims
- ✓ Victims of identity theft and financial fraud
- ✓ Spanish speaking victims
- ✓ Deaf youth
- ✓ Those with mental health needs
- ✓ Citizens who are lower working class

Surveys identified:

- ✓ Victims with mental health issues
- ✓ Child victims
- ✓ Child victims of physical or sexual abuse
- ✓ Child victims of neglect

Existing innovative services:

- ✓ Child Advocacy Centers

Programs on key informants' "wishlist" include:

- ✓ More mental health services
- ✓ More transportation services
- ✓ More funding for legal aid
- ✓ More Spanish interpreters
- ✓ Advocates for African-American women
- ✓ Assistance for military returnees and families
- ✓ More prevention programs
- ✓ More funds for existing staffing
- ✓ Women's shelter
- ✓ Educational prevention training and aftercare for victims

At the district meeting, participants reflected on the above findings and used a consensus process to answer the question "What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?" In a follow-up online survey District 2 residents were asked to prioritize the recommendations. The ranked recommendations were:

1. Basic Needs
Prevention/Intervention Programs for Families (tied for first)
2. Victim Services for Underserved Populations
3. Accessible, Affordable Health Care
4. Legal Advocacy and Outreach
5. Staff Needs
6. Skill-Building for Self Sufficiency for Victims

A complete depiction of the ideas and victim needs that make up each funding recommendation can be found on page 15.



Findings from Key Informant Interviews

Key informants from Judicial District 2 representing victim/witness specialists and coordinators, sheriff's offices, community service providers and departments of human services were interviewed. A total of 12 individuals were interviewed (10 women and two men) in five interview settings. The following summarizes the themes that emerged from these interviews.

Crime Trends

There is a perception that crime trends may show a significant increase in burglaries, in many cases by juveniles; illegal and prescription drug abuse; computer theft, child abuse, neglect and pornography; identity theft and internet crime. Some perceive that illegal drug related crime trends are holding steady rather than increasing yet those using drugs are younger. There is also a perception that violent crimes are increasing among youth as well.

Underserved Populations


Key informants interviewed defined those as underserved as victims with alcohol and other drug treatment needs, gay and lesbian communities, victims of identity theft and financial fraud, Spanish speaking victims, Deaf youth, those with mental health needs and citizens who are lower working class.

Regularly Referred to Programs and "Wishlist"

When asked what kinds of services victims are commonly referred to for assistance and support, key informants said: domestic violence programs, sexual assault programs, victim/witness services, counseling, private agencies requiring insurance and human services. One community talked of a child advocacy center opening in May with the hope it will be able to help children by offering counseling and other long-term services. Another community talked about having a child advocacy center that is under funded and needs to be opened longer than regular business hours.

On the same note key informants also identified programs and services they wish they had available in their local community:

- ✓ More mental health services
- ✓ More transportation services
- ✓ More funding for legal aid
- ✓ More Spanish interpreters
- ✓ Advocates for African-American women
- ✓ Assistance for military returnees and families
- ✓ More prevention programs

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- ✓ More funds for existing staffing
 - ✓ Women's shelter
 - ✓ Educational prevention training and aftercare for victims

Assets key informants wish were available include:

- ✓ Homeless shelter
- ✓ Positive places for juveniles to go

Victim Rights Difficult to Enforce

Most informants discussed the victim rights notification process used in their community. When asked about which rights were difficult to enforce many key informants said restitution, speedy trials and victim waiting rooms separate from defendants. Informants acknowledged that employers do not always cooperate with victims who come to court and miss work.

Limitations with “*restitution as allowed by law*” and “*a civil judgment for unpaid restitution*” were discussed frequently. There is a perception in some communities that restitution is never paid and that there are no programs set up for collection.

“*Timely disposition of case*” is another right that appeared particularly difficult to enforce. Scheduling delays by the courts is seen to be a huge problem. One key informant states “victims cannot deal with multiple delays”.

Findings from Unmet Needs Survey Results

Ten individuals representing law enforcement, victim/witness programs, human services and community-based victim service programs completed the Unmet Needs Survey in the three counties that comprise Judicial District 2.

Who are Underserved?

More than 50% of the respondents think the following victims of crime are underserved.

Who are underserved?	N = 10	%
Child victims of physical abuse	7	70%
Victims with mental health issues	6	60%
Child victims of sexual abuse	6	60%
Child victims of neglect	6	60%
Victims of Identity theft	6	60%
Child victims	5	50%

When given a list of potentially underserved populations, District 2 interviewees strongly identified the list above. This list supplements the findings from the interviews and points out a few community groups that did not come readily to people's minds during the interview discussions.

Community Coordination and Unmet Needs

When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being 'Not At All' and 3 and 4 being 'Very Much', please rate the extent to which you believe that the current service system..." the following represent the majority "Very Much" response. Respondents could also answer "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable".

The current service system...	"Very Much" Response	N = 10	%
Is integrated, that is, agencies are by various means linked together to allow services to be provided in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.	Very Much	7	70%
Creates opportunities for joint planning across different types of agencies (e.g., legal, mental health, physical health, public safety, domestic violence, child welfare).	Very Much	7	70%
Shares information about what services agencies currently deliver or are planning to deliver.	Very Much	7	70%
Can be accessed at different stages of victim recovery process.	Very Much	6	60%
Allows differing points of view to exist among organizations.	Very Much	6	60%
Is characterized by efficient and accurate communication.	Very Much	6	60%
Provides services that are individualized.	Very Much	5	50%
Provides services that are gender specific.	Very Much	5	50%
Provides services that are accessible.	Very Much	5	50%
Fosters a "big picture" understanding of the service system and the roles/ responsibilities of the agencies that constitute that system.	Very Much	5	50%

When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being 'Not At All' and 3 and 4 being 'Very Much', please rate the extent to which you believe that the current service system..." the following represent the majority "**Not at All**" response. Respondents could also answer "Don't Know or "Not Applicable".

The current service system...	"Not at All" Response	N = 10	%
Prevents crime victims from getting lost in the complex system.	Not at All	8	80%
Provides services that are culturally appropriate.	Not at All	8	80%
Develops clear community-wide goals and plans.	Not at All	6	60%
Addresses the issues of trauma.	Not at All	6	60%
Involves crime victims in improving and/or changing services.	Not at All	6	60%
Ensures that agencies have timely access to client records in ways that do not violate client confidentiality and/or rights.	Not at All	4	40%
Provides services that incorporate non-traditional approaches.	Not at All	3	30%

Community Assets

When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being 'Not At All' and 3 and 4 being 'Very Much', please rate the availability of these community assets," the following represent the majority "**Very Much**" response. Respondents could also answer "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable".

Services and Supports	"Very Much" Response	N = 10	%
Food Assistance	Very Much	8	80%
Support Groups	Very Much	8	80%
Early Childhood Programs i.e. Headstart	Very Much	7	70%
Information and Referral Hotline	Very Much	7	70%

Services and Supports	"Very Much" Response	N = 37	%
After-School Programs	Very Much	6	60%
Senior Center / Programs	Very Much	5	50%
Mentoring	Very Much	5	50%
Recreation / Sports	Very Much	5	50%
Family Support Center / Services	Very Much	5	50%
Services for Persons with Disabilities	Very Much	5	50%

When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being 'Not At All' and 3 and 4 being 'Very Much'", please rate the availability of these community assets," the following represent the majority "**Not at All**" response. Respondents could also answer "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable".

Services and Supports	"Not at All" Response	N = 10	%
Transportation Assistance	Not at All	8	80%
Mental Health Services	Not at All	7	70%
Health Education	Not at All	6	60%
Supervised Visitation / Exchange	Not at All	6	60%
Job Training / Job Treatment	Not at All	5	50%
Substance Abuse Treatment, Education and	Not at All	5	50%
Violence Prevention	Not at All	5	50%
Community Service Learning	Not at All	5	50%
Housing Assistance	Not at All	4	40%
Low Cost or Free Clothing, Furniture and Housewares	Not at All	4	40%

District Meeting Findings and Prioritization Survey

Eight people from the three counties of Judicial District 2 (Kenosha, Racine and Walworth) attended the Crime Victim Needs Assessment Priority Setting Meeting in Kenosha, Wisconsin on May 1, 2008. The group a victim/witness coordinator, two domestic violence or sexual assault community organization staff members, two department of human services staff members, a community advocate, a law enforcement staff member and two legal advocate professionals.

An overview of the Office of Crime Victim Services needs assessment project was presented including the findings from interviews with people and the surveys conducted throughout Judicial District 2.

For the meeting, the findings discussed previously in this report were grouped to create a cohesive, flowing story of the interview and survey progress. The sections included: Crime Trends, Assets and Innovative Services, “Wishlist” of Services, Underserved Populations, and Crime Victims Rights.

Crime Trends

The group discussed what crime trends mirror what they see in their work and what is missing:

- ✓ Juvenile burglary is a huge deal.
- ✓ A concern was expressed about trafficking of children and what might be going on in their county.
- ✓ Sexual assault and drug abuse in middle schools.
- ✓ In our shelter we are seeing too many young women (17 and 18) with two and three children.
- ✓ The rise in adolescent sexual assault ties into the internet. Teens are meeting people on the internet who turnout to be 42.
- ✓ Increase in prescription medications for moms and the resulting problems.
- ✓ Internet addiction causes people to be chatting on the internet instead of caring for small children.
- ✓ Dating violence is a big thing along with domestic abuse and sexual assault.
- ✓ Mental illness attached to what crime victims are going through and often is combined with prescription drug abuse.
- ✓ Gun crimes are climbing especially for the younger population.

The conversation prompted the idea that many would like to see more positive collaboration among police jurisdictions.



Innovative Services and “Wishlist”

In one of the counties, it was noted that they are excited about the brand new Child Advocacy Center (CAC) that has still not completely rolled out all of its services. It will be used to support forensic interviewing and medical assessments for child victims. It is a great center where all systems come together and help the child by not making them go through multiple interviews and assessments because everyone is present at the one event. In another county within the district, an established CAC exists and is used by organizations from neighboring counties. In this county, six people are trained as forensic interviewers including social workers and law enforcement. The other county in the district has tried to create a CAC but turf and other issues have been barriers to success.

A new CAC is starting and things are moving really quickly – CAC is being urged to open up as soon as possible to start doing interviews and getting the word out. The CAC will not be ready for another year. Word is spreading like wildfire about this a multi-disciplinary unit which is a pilot for a national prototype.

Underserved Populations

The group underscored the following regarding the underserved populations generated by the interviews and surveys:

- ✓ Aging and disabled clients
- ✓ Autistic children and children diagnosed with ADD. There are so many that we cannot help them all, and there is no place for them in the human services world.
- ✓ Child abuse

The group identified some gaps and barriers for underserved populations and what might help bridge the gaps:

- ✓ Language barriers
- ✓ Free legal aid
- ✓ Prevention programs – so many issues, we become social workers – getting through divorce, etc.
- ✓ Prevention – 90% of these children had an early abuse referral.
- ✓ We’d like to see many of these programs going directly into the home...i.e. to address transportation barriers.
- ✓ Our county does not want to support a shelter – we have to refer to other communities for shelter.
- ✓ Need free mental health services every single day.

Crime Victims’ Rights

The group reviewed the list of changes needed for improving victim rights delivery. They thought the following differences would be made if these changes were achieved:

- ✓ More victims would come forward.
- ✓ Healing process quicker.
- ✓ Separate waiting space would be easy. (Kenosha does not have this issues.)
- ✓ Enforcement by Department of Corrections – seems easy! They need to be held to task.
- ✓ Court collections being able to be received by agencies for victim services.
- ✓ More government – would be OK if it pays for itself out of collected fees?

For the second part of the meeting, participants incorporated the interview findings and their reflections into a consensus process to answer the question “What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?” The recommendations list appears below and more details are available in Appendix A.

In a final step to understand the victim services needs in District 2, these emerging recommendations were incorporated into an internet based survey tool which sought to prioritize the recommendations. Interviewed key informants, participants from the district meeting and all other known service providers in the district were asked to complete the survey. Two individuals voted to prioritize the needs.

The ranked recommendations were:

1. Basic Needs
 - Prevention/Intervention Programs for Families (tied for first)
2. Victim Services for Underserved Populations
3. Accessible, Affordable Health Care
4. Legal Advocacy and Outreach
5. Staff Needs
6. Skill-Building for Self Sufficiency for Victims

Implications

Members of District 2 placed priorities from two ends of the spectrum in their top ranking for funding recommendations: **Basic Needs** and **Prevention/Intervention Programs for Families**. With **Basic Needs**, district members seek to address the fundamental and daily needs of victims of crime that are not always directly related to the crime but significantly impact their lives such as access to housing and transportation. Input from the interviews and surveys echo this priority. During interviews and surveys, many community members identified transportation, affordable housing stock and emergency or temporary shelter as unavailable and a much needed service. By valuing funds for Basic Needs, it is perceived that crime victims would have greater capacity to assist the justice system and be present for court proceedings.

The other top ranked priority, **Prevention/Intervention Programs for Families**, addresses youth, children and families, in particular, with services directed at assisting them in living crime free lives as well as post-crime services that are seamless and supportive. From child advocacy centers to prevention programs in schools and other agencies for youth, this priority recognizes the often cyclical nature of violence and the need for early intervention and prevention to stop the cycle. With this recommendation, district members linked to “wishlist” items that were identified during the interviews in the district. The recommendation also addresses one of the most often mentioned underserved populations: children.

Similarly, the second ranked priority addresses communities that are struggling to access services: **Victim Services for Underserved**. In particular this priority highlights elders and Hispanics as needing services. This recommendation attempts to aid both crime victims and the system with such services as interpreters. With interpreter services, victims are better able to participate in the legal process and they are also better able to request additional support in all areas of their lives. Throughout the needs assessment process, District 2 members recognized Spanish-speaking communities as underserved. The prioritization of this recommendation supports their improved access to services. Participants at the district meeting further identified elders as underserved, linking this priority to some of the crime trends especially identity theft and internet crime.

Accessible, Affordable Health Care which includes physical and mental health services ranked third for District 2. This priority would assist the insured and uninsured equally by improving the quality of services as well as the access to services. This priority captures the sentiments of those interviewed and present at the district meeting. Victims with mental health issues were included as underserved in the surveys and many participants spoke of the specific needs of those living with mental illness. Access to all areas of health care emerged as prominent for district members.

Appendix A

What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?						
Prevention/ Intervention Programs for Families	Legal Advocacy and Outreach	Basic Needs	Victim Services for Under- served Populations	Skill- Building for Self- Sufficiency for Victims	Accessible/ Affordable Health Care	Staff Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Child advocacy centers ✓ Advocacy centers in all counties ✓ SA/DV prevention programs for children ✓ Preventive education schools ✓ Using grant \$\$ for prevention activities ✓ Develop accountability program to teach youth consequences ✓ Intervention programs for youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Free legal aid ✓ Legal fees/ attorneys fees ✓ Victim comp time off work ✓ Allowing under-served clients to access services with no questions asked ✓ Legal services for low income ✓ Study trafficking problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Affordable housing for victims ✓ Housing funding ✓ Homeless shelters ✓ Transportation costs to/ from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elder abuse services ✓ Hispanic inter- preters ✓ Inter- preters (DV/SA for advocates) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Job training for DV victims ✓ In-home services for clients ✓ Job training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Health care for the uninsured ✓ Free mental health services for victims ✓ Free service for mentally ill (counseling, meds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support the people that do this hard work ✓ Diversity training

